



**IDAHO NATIONAL GUARD**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT OFFICE**  
**4715 SOUTH BYRD STREET, BUILDING 518**  
**BOISE, IDAHO 83705-8095**



April 15, 2022

In Reply Refer To: 30-day public review and comment period for the proposed Simco Training Area Environmental Assessment (EA) and draft Finding of No Significant Impact.

Dear Public Agency/Participant:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Idaho Army National Guard (IDARNG), on behalf of the National Guard Bureau (NGB), are soliciting comments on the IDARNG's proposal to use lands managed by the BLM, Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), and Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) for military maneuver training activities. The proposed training area is approximately 28,430 acres in size, and is located east of Simco Road in Elmore County, adjacent to the Orchard Combat Training Center (OCTC). The IDARNG requires the proposed training area to offset reduced availability of accessible maneuver training lands within the OCTC to meet Department of the Army training requirements, prepare for and ensure troop combat readiness and safety, limit user conflicts with the public, and comply with the Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area (NCA) legislation. The proposal does not include live fire exercises.

The IDARNG requests from BLM rights-of-way on 12,776 acres of BLM-managed lands, 555 acres of BOR lands managed by BLM, and seeks from IDL a long-term lease on 15,097 acres of IDL-managed lands. The majority (74%) of the proposed training area falls within the NCA. As such, the BLM is the co-lead agency with the IDARNG/NGB for the development of the EA.

The BLM and the IDARNG will each issue separate decisions based on the EA. The BLM will issue a decision on whether to authorize rights-of-way for the proposed expanded military training area. The IDARNG will issue a decision on whether to expand military training onto proposed Federal and State land.

A copy of the EA and draft FONSI for the proposed project and associated alternatives can be downloaded from the IDARNG website <https://emomil.imd.idaho.gov> (under the heading "Documents for Review") or the BLM's ePlanning website <https://go.usa.gov/xsbJZ>. Hard copies of the document are also available at the Boise and Mountain Home public libraries:

- Boise Public Library, 715 S. Capitol Boulevard, Boise, ID 83702
- Mountain Home Public Library, 790 North 10th East, Mountain Home, ID 83647

The public comment period will open **April 15, 2022**. Comments made on this proposal would be most helpful if they are received by the close of business on **May 16, 2022**, and

comments must be directly relevant to the proposal and project area. The EA and final FONSI are expected to be completed in May of 2022, with a final decision in June 2022.

The BLM and IDARNG will also be hosting a virtual meeting via Zoom on April 21, 2022 to summarize the proposed action and alternatives (including those that were not carried forward for assessment), identify how to access and download copies of the EA and draft FONSI, and outline the process and timeline to submit comments. Because this is not a scoping session, questions will be limited to clarifying what was presented. Preregistration is required, after which a confirmation email will be sent with information on how to join the meeting. You can register for the Zoom meeting on the BLM's ePlanning site <https://go.usa.gov/xsBJZ>.

The purpose of this 30-day review and comment period is to obtain public input on the EA and draft FONSI. Those who provide comments are advised that before including their personal identifying information (address, email, phone number), they should be aware that their entire comment—including their personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While those commenting can ask in their comments to withhold this information from public review, the BLM and IDARNG cannot guarantee that they will be able to do so.

Any individuals, groups, or organizations wishing to comment on this process should attend the public Zoom meeting or submit written comments to:

Idaho Army National Guard  
Environmental Management Office  
Attention: Charles Baun  
4715 South Byrd Street, Building 518  
Boise, Idaho 83705-8095

Or

Bureau of Land Management  
BLM Four Rivers Field Office  
Attention: Charlotte Alexander  
3948 Development Avenue  
Boise, ID 83705

Electronic comments should be submitted to **[ng.id.idarng.list.ngid-emo@army.mil](mailto:ng.id.idarng.list.ngid-emo@army.mil)** or **[BLM\\_ID\\_FourRiversOffice@blm.gov](mailto:BLM_ID_FourRiversOffice@blm.gov)**, with the title of this project in the subject line, by close of business on May 16, 2022.

*Before including address, phone number, email address, or any other personal identifying information in your comments, be advised that your entire comment, including personal identifying information, may be made publicly available at any time. While individuals may request that the BLM withhold personal identifying information from public view, the BLM cannot guarantee it will be able to do so. If you wish us to withhold your personal information, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comment. We will make all submissions from organizations or businesses available for public disclosure in their entirety.*